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ABSTRACT

This teacher's guide for public television's 6-part adaptation of George Eliot's "Middlemarch" provides information that will enrich students' viewing of the series. The guide includes a wide range of activities to help students further explore the novel's universal themes. The guide suggests that students read the informational materials first and also that they organize into small groups before viewing each episode and discuss one or both of the pre-viewing questions provided. It also suggests that, after watching each episode, the teacher should discuss with the students the post-viewing questions and choose the activities in the guide that best meet their classroom needs. Exploring such topics as love and marriage, history, medicine, and law, these activities are well suited for both social studies and English classes and are designed for both individual and group work. The guide's final lesson will help students compare "Middlemarch" the television series with "Middlemarch" the novel. (NKA)

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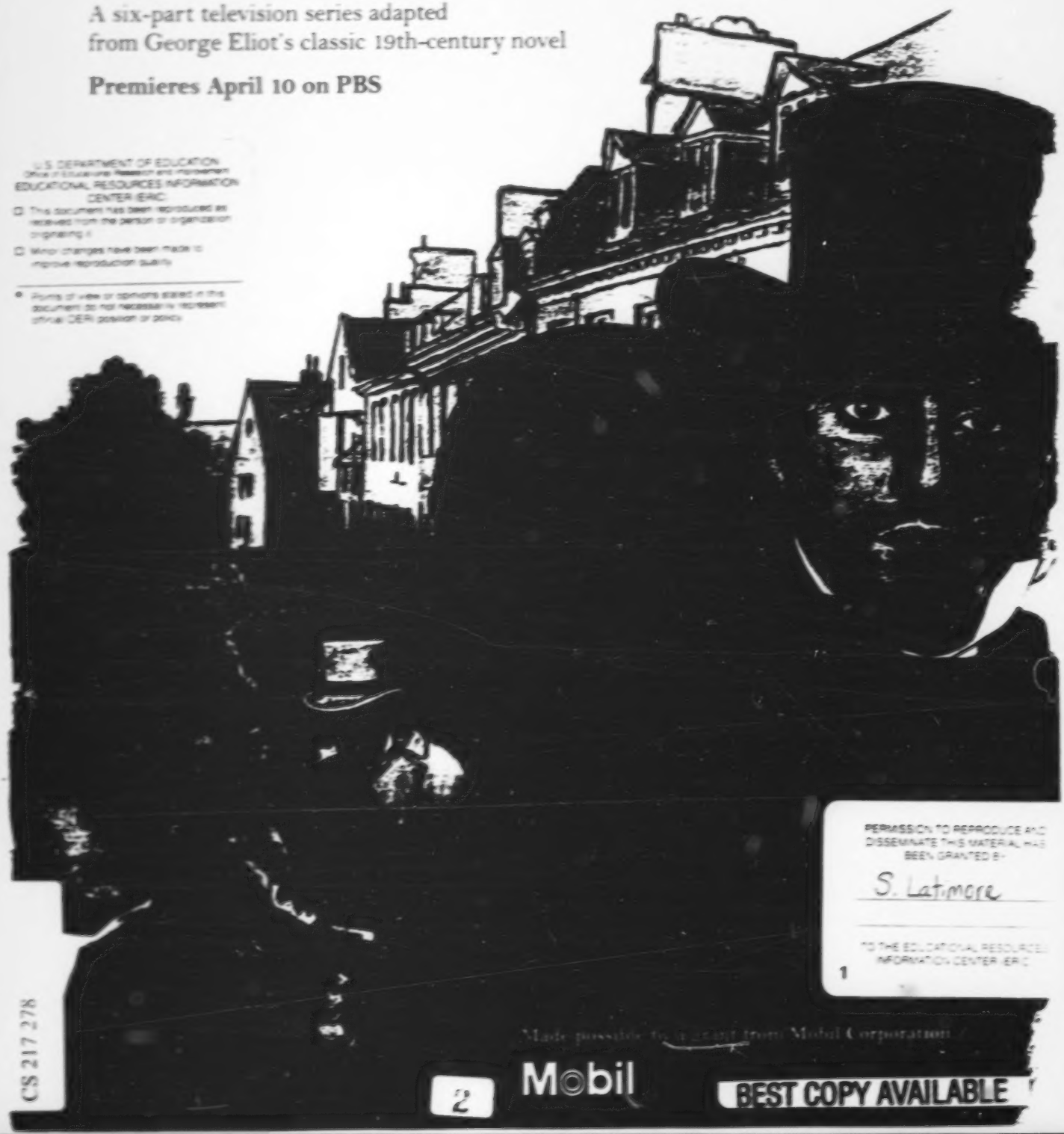
Mobil Masterpiece Theatre Presents

A Teacher's Guide for

Middlemarch

A six-part television series adapted
from George Eliot's classic 19th-century novel

Premieres April 10 on PBS



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Mobil Corporation

Dear Educator,

Two years ago, Mobil and the WGBH Educational Foundation were delighted to bring into your classroom the teacher's guide and presentation of the MASTERPIECE THEATRE production of *Henry V*.

We are pleased and proud to have the opportunity to bring another great classic to you in the same way this year – George Eliot's *Middlemarch*.

MASTERPIECE THEATRE has been on television now for 25 years, and over that time frame has won a total of 30 Emmys while being nominated for many, many more. In fact, both Mobil and WGBH were awarded a special Emmy by the Board of Governors of the National Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for our continuing support of the program on public television.

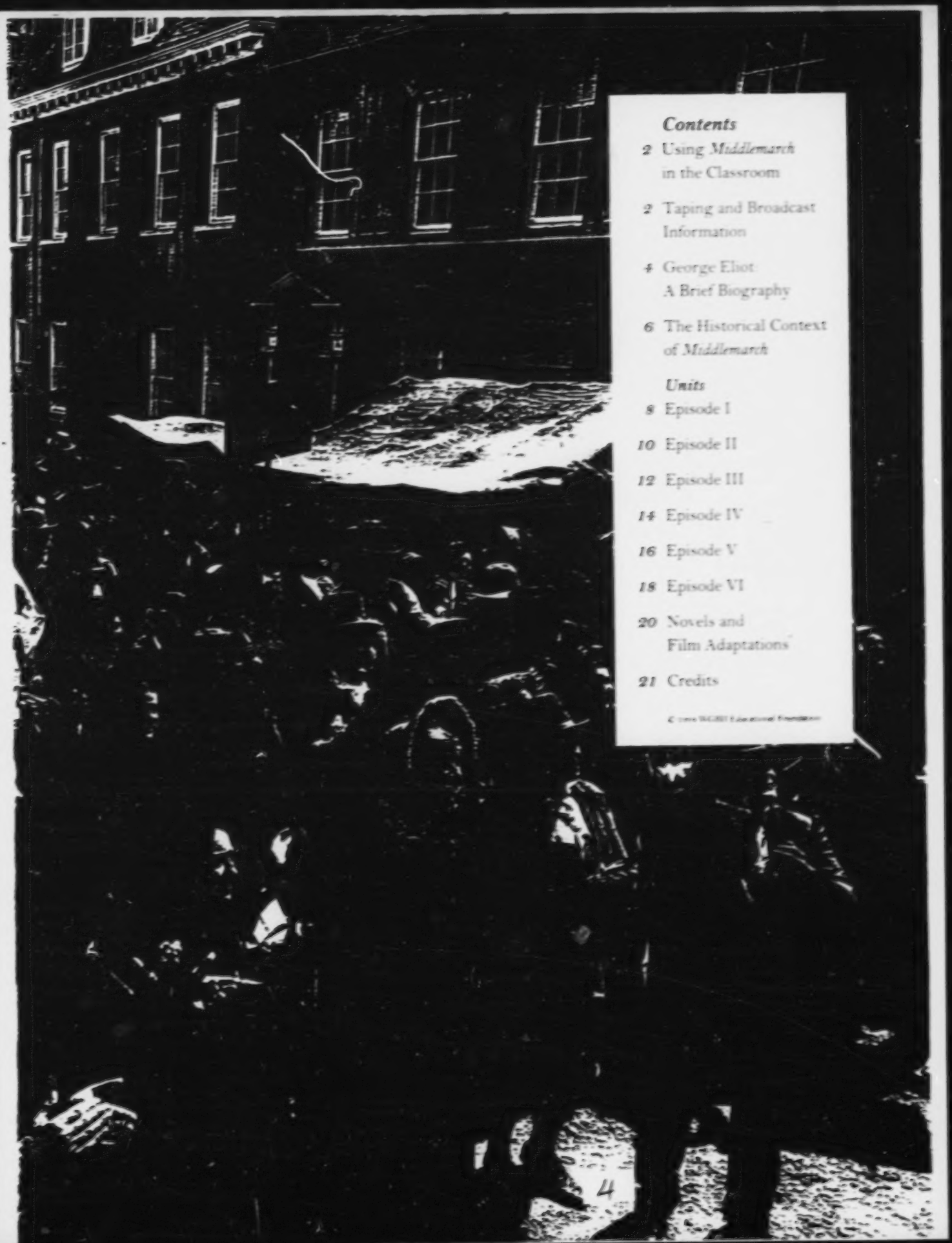
Middlemarch is the third MASTERPIECE THEATRE presentation in five years that WGBH and Mobil have brought to the classroom with a teacher's guide designed to make it a more satisfying experience for your students. *A Tale of Two Cities* and *Henry V* preceded it. Your comments on those programs have encouraged us to continue the effort to offer such programs more widely.

We hope you and your class will also enjoy the Eliot tale of the people of Middlemarch caught up in the changing world wrought by the Industrial Revolution.

Sincerely,

Allen E. Murray

Allen E. Murray
Chairman of the Board
Chief Executive Officer



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Using Middlemarch in the Classroom

Welcome to public television's six-part adaptation of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* – a story about a group of 19th-century English men and women whose interwoven lives unfold in an era of political upheaval. This teacher's guide provides information that will enrich your students' viewing of the series including a wide range of activities to help them further explore its universal themes.

Before your class begins watching *Middlemarch* at home or at school, we recommend that you photocopy and distribute the information on pages 4 through 7 about George Eliot and the era in which *Middlemarch* takes place.

We also suggest that you break the class into small groups prior to viewing each episode, and ask the groups to discuss one or both of the pre-viewing questions provided in the accompanying unit.

Townspeople gather for the opening of Middlemarch's new hospital – a symbol of more changes on the horizon.

After watching each episode, discuss the post-viewing questions and choose the activities in the unit that best meet your classroom needs. Exploring such topics as love and marriage, history, medicine, and law, these activities are well suited for both social studies and English classes and are designed for both individual and group work.

Each unit also includes a reproducible student activity page with passages from the novel *Middlemarch*. These activities – with description, dialogue, and narration from the novel – will give your students an opportunity to appreciate the power and charm of Eliot's writing as they watch the series.

Use the final lesson on page 20 to help your students compare *Middlemarch* the television series to *Middlemarch* the novel. This material can also be used to discuss other films or television shows you watch in class.

Taping Information

Educators may tape *Middlemarch* and use it in the classroom for three full years after broadcast – until April 9, 1997.

Broadcast Information

The six episodes of *Middlemarch* will air on most PBS stations from 9:00pm to 10:00pm est,* except Episode I, which will air from 9:00pm to 10:30pm.

Episode I Sunday, April 10	Episode IV Sunday, May 1
Episode II Sunday, April 17	Episode V Sunday, May 8
Episode III Sunday, April 24	Episode VI Sunday, May 15

*Check local listings for broadcast and rebroadcast dates and times in your area.

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Dorothea and Casaubon are immediately drawn to one another when they first meet at Tipton Grange.

A Middlemarcher offers his views on proposed government reforms.

Middlemarch Videocassettes

For videocassette purchasing information, contact:

PBS Video
1320 Braddock Place
Alexandria, VA 22314-1698
1 (800) 424-7963
fax: (703) 739-5269

Book Purchasing Information

The MASTERPIECE THEATRE companion edition of George Eliot's *Middlemarch* – including an introduction by A.S. Byatt – will be available in May in hardcover from Modern Library for $15. To order call 1 (800) 733-9000.

With his friend Naumann (left), Ladislaw (right) devises a plan that will allow him to spend time with Dorothea in Rome away from Casaubon.

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George Eliot: A Brief Biography

George Eliot was born Mary Ann Evans on November 22, 1819, in Warwickshire, England. She was the daughter of Robert Evans and Christina Pearson, and was the youngest of their five children. A precocious and religious child, Evans was teaching Sunday school to the local farm children at the age of 12.

After her mother's death in 1836, Evans served as both companion and assistant to her father, a land agent. During this period she also became acquainted with religious free-thinkers and began to question the orthodoxy of the Anglican Church. In 1846 she published an English translation of German author D. F. Strauss's *The Life of Jesus Critically Examined*.

In 1849, after the death of her father, Evans moved to London. There she worked as a writer and editor for the *Westminster Review*. In 1854 she published a translation of German author Ludwig Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity*.

An 1849 drawing of George Eliot at 30.

In London Evans met George Henry Lewes, a writer, critic, philosopher, and actor. The two intellectuals quickly went from colleagues to friends to live-in lovers. Though Lewes was married with children when he began his relationship with Evans, his wife had been living with another man for several years. Because of legal and financial restrictions, however, Lewes was unable to obtain a divorce and he and Eliot were much criticized for living together.

The schoolroom where George Eliot was educated as a girl in Nuneaton, England.

At the suggestion of Lewes, Evans began writing fiction in September 1857, beginning what she called a new era in her life. At this time she took the pen name George Eliot – George after her lover and Eliot because she said it was "a good mouth-filling word."

Her first work was a collection of stories and sketches about the people of Warwickshire, the town of her youth. This collection, called *Scenes from Clerical Life*, was quickly published in *Blackwood's Magazine*. Her next writing venture, the novel *Adam Bede* (1860), was a popular and critical success.

Everyone was curious to find out who the mysterious George Eliot was. Several people claimed the honor, but finally, Evans stepped forward.

Evans continued writing at a prodigious pace. A year after *Adam Bede*, she wrote *The Mill on the Floss* and *Silas Marner*. The following year *Romola* was published in *Cornhill Magazine*. She wrote the political novel *Felix Holt the Radical* in 1866 and *The Spanish Gypsy* in 1868. She became an unequivocal success, and was no longer scorned for her unorthodox

relationship with Lewes. She went on to write her most acclaimed novel, *Middlemarch*, between 1871 and 1872, followed by *Daniel Deronda* in 1876.

During their heyday, Evans and Lewes's home became a meeting place for intellectuals of the era including the American essayist Ralph Waldo Emerson, the Russian novelist Ivan Turgenev, and the German composer Richard Wagner.

In 1878, after a steep decline in health, George Lewes died in his sleep. Devastated by the loss, Evans immersed herself in work.

During the next year, Evans made final corrections to one of Lewes's manuscripts, set up a scholarship in his name, and wrote *Impressions of Tehophrastus Such*. In the spring of 1880, she married John Walter Cross. Evans was 61 and Cross 41, but she was beyond scandal. They lived together until December of 1880, when Evans died, five days after catching a cold.

Because she had not lived by the rules of the church, her body was forbidden burial in Westminster Abbey's Poet's Corner. Instead, her husband chose a plot near where George Lewes lay in Highgate Cemetery.

The Griff House in Warwickshire, England, where George Eliot was born.

The Historical Context of Middlemarch

George Eliot set *Middlemarch* in the England of the 1830s, a turbulent era in which the forces of change played tug-of-war with the status quo.

Politics

One of the most contentious issues of the day was parliamentary reform. Parliament was grossly unrepresentative of the population; seats in both houses of Parliament were controlled by wealthy upper-class landowners. The government was elected by only 18 percent of the male population. Women, the working class, Catholics, non-Anglican Protestants, and many businessmen were forbidden to vote. And while some districts with tiny populations or even no population were fully represented, others with large populations had little or no representation.

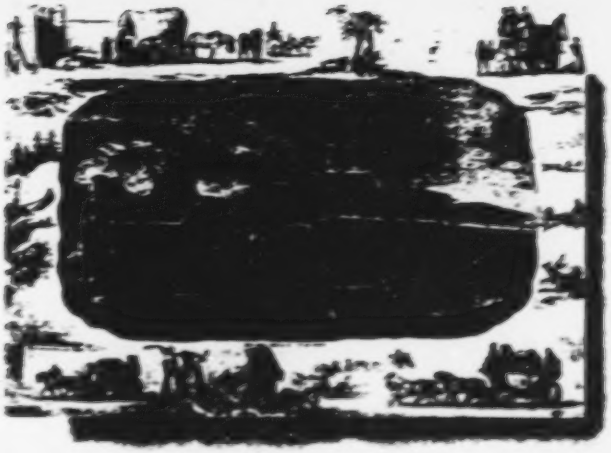
After extensive rioting throughout the country, the Reform Bill was passed in 1832. But while this bill redistributed parliamentary seats more fairly and gave most middle-class men the right to vote, women and the working class were still excluded from the decision-making process.

This 1830 woodcut depicts one of many public gatherings in England where people came to discuss and debate the Reform Bill of 1832 – a bill designed to give more people the right to vote and more equal representation in Parliament.

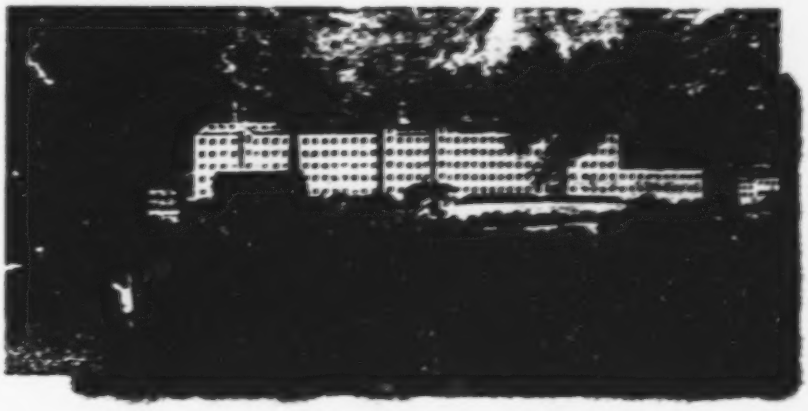
Before the medical discoveries of the late 1800s, most patients were cared for in their homes, rather than in hospitals.

Medicine

Knowledge about the body and disease and its treatment grew exponentially during the 19th century. Many new techniques, such as microscopy, began to take the place of less accurate methods of observation. Actual change among physicians was slow, however, and well-trained doctors versed in the latest medical knowledge were rare.



In the mid 1800s, railroads began to replace horse-drawn carts and wagons as the primary means of freight transportation in England.



During the Industrial Revolution, huge factories cropped up all over England in rural areas where farming had once been the sole occupation.

Religion and Culture

While political and economic change swept across England in the 19th century, most people remained steadfastly dedicated to the strict codes of behavior dictated by the Church.

Above all else, women were expected to marry well. They were to bear children and stay close to home. Men were expected to be the sole wage earner and head of household.

Unwavering commitment to the Church and its teachings was considered the highest of virtues. And while Darwin's theory of evolution, published in 1859, presented a formidable challenge to Christian creation beliefs, most people regarded it as blasphemous and remained firm in their faith.

Economics

Middlemarch takes place during the Industrial Revolution, a time when factories and urban areas sprang up in farming villages once isolated and dependent upon wealthy landowners. The mill hands who left their failing farms behind to work in factories, however, found that life remained oppressive. Many of them – including children – worked 12- to 14-hour days and continued to live in poverty. England was fast becoming the world's richest nation, but the wide disparity between its wealthy and its poor continued.

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Episode I

Plot Synopsis

In response to an invitation from the wealthy benefactor Nicholas Bulstrode, Tertius Lydgate – a young physician with new ideas about medicine – comes to Middlemarch to run a new hospital.

Against the advice of her uncle and sister, Dorothea Brooke marries the scholar Casaubon, a man she hardly knows. At Lowick, she meets Casaubon's impassioned cousin Will Ladislaw, whom she encounters again during her honeymoon in Rome.

Fred Vincy is in love with Mary Garth, but she won't have him until he earns her respect by settling on a career and paying his debts. Fred hopes for salvation through an inheritance from his uncle Featherstone.

Pre-Viewing Questions

1 What kinds of things does our society expect of women? of men? How might these expectations limit a person's choices in life?

2 What does it mean to "make a difference" in the world? How do you think it is accomplished?

Post-Viewing Questions

1 What attracts Dorothea to Casaubon and Casaubon to Dorothea? What does each of them expect from their marriage? What do their views about each other reveal about themselves? Predict what you think will happen to them.

2 Choose a *Middlemarch* character. What is the difference between what this character seems to think about herself or himself and the impression you have of her or him? How might this character's lack of self-knowledge prove dangerous?

3 To which characters is self-sacrifice important? To which characters is it unimportant? Why?

Suggested Activities

1 On the facing page is a reproducible activity sheet that uses excerpts from the novel to give students more insight into its two major characters. Photocopy and distribute the activity sheet and have students complete the assignment, in groups or as homework. Afterwards, have students discuss their answers with the entire class.

2 Celia is horrified that Dorothea finds Casaubon appealing. The night after meeting him, both women draw a cartoon of Casaubon in their journals. Ask students to discuss why Celia finds Casaubon so uninteresting, and why Dorothea finds him so appealing. Then, have students draw both Celia's and Dorothea's cartoons. Ask them which depiction they find more accurate and why.

3 Ask students to name some of the social and political issues of the 1830s that are apparent in Episode I. Which of these issues do they think our culture is still grappling with today, and how? Ask students what issues they might raise if they were to write a contemporary story or play. Have them make a list of some of the issues they might include, with notes about how they might work them into a narrative.

4 Have students devote half a page or an entire page in a notebook to the following characters: Casaubon, Dorothea, Ladislaw, Bulstrode, Rosamond, Mary, Fred, and Lydgate. After each episode, ask them to note the important events that happen to each of these characters, including the conflicts, climaxes, and resolutions that affect them.

5 In groups, have your students discuss their impressions of Casaubon and Dorothea and note the similarities and differences between girls' and boys' responses to these characters.

Dr. Tertius Lydgate arrives by coach in Middlemarch, a small town where he hopes to do great things for the medical profession.

Student Activity

Dorothea and Lydgate

Middlemarch was originally two separate stories – one about Tertius Lydgate and one about Dorothea Brooke. When George Eliot put the two stories together, Lydgate and Dorothea remained the central characters. **Instructions:** Read the following six passages from the novel and, on a separate sheet, answer the questions accompanying each passage.

A description of Dorothea Brooke

A

Most men thought her bewitching when she was on horseback. She loved the fresh air ... she felt that she enjoyed [riding] in a pagan sensuous way, and always looked forward to renouncing it. (*Chapter 1*)

A1 Carefully consider Eliot's choice of words. What kind of image does this passage evoke in your mind? Why do you think Dorothea would want to give up something she enjoyed?

A description of Dr. Lydgate

B

Mr. Lydgate had the medical accomplishment of looking perfectly grave whenever nonsense was talked to him, and his dark steady eyes gave him impressiveness as a listener. (*Chapter 10*)

B1 Explain the subtle humor in this quote about Lydgate.

Dorothea speaking with Sir James Chettam about tenants

C

"I think we deserve to be beaten out of our beautiful houses with a scourge of small cords – all of us who let tenants live in such sties as we see round us. Life in cottages might be happier than ours, if they were real houses fit for human beings ..." (*Chapter 3*)

C1 Write down three adjectives that describe Dorothea's tone in this speech. If you were directing an actor to deliver these lines, how would you tell her to look, move, and speak?

Lydgate to himself about his profession

D

"I should never have been happy in any profession that did not call forth the highest intellectual strain, and yet keep me in good warm contact with my neighbors." (*Chapter 11*)

D1 What does this quote tell us about Lydgate?

Dorothea to herself about marrying Casaubon

E

"It would be my duty to study that I might help him the better in his great works. There would be nothing trivial about our lives. ... And then I should know what to do when I got older. ... I don't feel sure about doing good in any way now: everything seems like going on a mission to a people whose language I don't know." (*Chapter 8*)

E1 What concerns of Dorothea's does this passage reflect? Which words or phrases in the passage best convey the meaning of her thoughts?

E2 What do passages A, C, and E tell the reader about Dorothea?

Narrator on Lydgate's role in Middlemarch

F

Middlemarch, in fact, counted on swallowing Lydgate and assimilating him very comfortably. (*Chapter 11*)

F1 How do you think a town can "swallow" a person?

F2 Based on what you've read and seen, what do you think of Lydgate? Would you want him to be your doctor? What do you predict will happen to him?

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Episode II

Plot Synopsis

There is much tension between Casaubon and Dorothea on their honeymoon in Rome. Upon their return they argue about Ladislaw, and Casaubon has a heart attack. Contrary to Dorothea's wishes, Brooke invites Ladislaw to Middlemarch.

Caleb Garth's family pays off Fred Vincy's debt. Shortly afterward Fred develops typhoid fever. After being misdiagnosed by Dr. Wrench, Fred is treated by Dr. Lydgate.

Lydgate begins to spend time with Fred's sister Rosamond and their flirtation becomes the talk of Middlemarch. The Bulstrodes warn them of its inappropriateness, but their words are forgotten in a moment's passion.

Pre-Viewing Questions

1 How might society influence a person when he or she is choosing a mate?

2 What are some of the reasons people fear change in their community?

Post-Viewing Questions

1 How well is Lydgate adjusting to life in Middlemarch? Who or what is helping or hurting him? Use examples from this episode to support your opinions.

2 Describe Caleb Garth. Why do you think he pays Fred's debt?

3 Why do you think Dorothea, Rosamond, and Celia choose the men they do? Why do you think Casaubon, Lydgate, and Chettam choose the women they do? What, if anything, do the women's choices have in common? the men's?

4 Is Casaubon the man he appears to be? Why or why not? Use examples from the program to support your answer.

5 How do the people of Middlemarch view change – new inventions, new ways of practicing medicine, new laws, and newcomers to the town? How are these reactions to change similar to and/or different from responses to change in your community?

Suggested Activities

1 On the facing page is a reproducible activity sheet with excerpts from the novel designed to help students examine Eliot's use of dialogue. Photocopy and distribute the activity sheet and have students complete the assignment, in groups or as homework. Afterwards, have students discuss their answers with the entire class.

2 Suggest that students bring Dorothea and Casaubon into the 20th century so they can get help from a couples counselor. Students can script or improvise a counseling session in which the couple reveals their difficulties and a therapist offers advice.

3 Invite students to design a brochure for Middlemarch's new hospital that will help attract new patients, additional benefactors, and top physicians. Suggest that they include a drawing of the buildings and grounds, a list of the facilities and a description and perhaps a portrait of Dr. Lydgate. It can be a hospital for the 1830s or the 1990s.

4 To find out how medicine was practiced in England and the United States in the 1830s, have students use reference materials to write a report about the treatment of typhoid, cholera, and heart disease or the life of a doctor during this period.

5 Have students write a journal entry as one of the Middlemarch characters after an incident from Episode II. They might, for example, write Mary's entry after she gives Fred her savings.

Casaubon and Dorothea on their honeymoon in Rome.

Dialogue in Middlemarch

Student Activity

Instructions: Read the following three passages of dialogue from George Eliot's novel and, on a separate sheet, answer the questions that accompany each passage.

Dorothea and Casaubon discussing Will Ladislaw

A

"What is that, my love?" said Mr. Casaubon (he always said "my love," when his manner was the coldest).

"...He means soon to go back to England, and work his own way. I thought you would consider that a good sign," said Dorothea, with an appealing look into her husband's neutral face.

"Did he mention the precise order of occupation to which he would addict himself?" *(Chapter 22)*

A1 What does this dialogue reveal about Casaubon's attitude toward Ladislaw?

A2 What word in this passage describes the way Dorothea looks at Casaubon, and what word describes what she sees in his face? What does this image of the couple convey about their relationship?

Fred talking with Mary after her father has decided to use his family's savings to pay Fred's debts

B

"I suppose your father wanted your earnings," said old Mr. Featherstone, with his usual power of unpleasant surmise, when Mary returned to him. "He makes but a tight fit, I reckon. You're of age now; you ought to be saving for yourself."

"I consider my father and mother the best part of myself, sir," said Mary, coldly. *(Chapter 23)*

C

"I wouldn't have hurt you so for the world, Mary," he said at last. "You can never forgive me."

"What does it matter whether I forgive you?" said Mary passionately. "Would that make it any better for my mother to lose the money she has been earning for lessons for four years...? Should you think all that pleasant enough if I forgave you?"

"Say what you like, Mary. I deserve it all."

"I don't want to say anything," said Mary, more quietly, "my anger is of no use." *(Chapter 25)*

C1 How would you describe Mary's speech to Fred? How does she use logic to make her point?

C2 Mary is characterized in the novel as a talkative woman with a sharp tongue. Why then does she resort to silence?

C3 What do Fred's words reveal about his personality?

Mary speaking with Featherstone after she has given her father money to repay Fred Vincy's debt

B1 What does Featherstone mean when he says, "He makes but a tight fit"?

B2 What does this passage tell the reader about Featherstone?

B3 Write a character description of Mary based on her words from passages B and C.

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Episode III

Plot Synopsis

On his deathbed Peter Featherstone orders Mary Garth to burn one of his two wills, but Mary refuses. As a result Featherstone's illegitimate son, Joshua Rigg, inherits Stone Court. Featherstone's nephew, Fred Vincy, receives nothing.

Lydgate and Rosamond marry and their financial troubles begin.

Ladislaw visits Lowick, to the delight of Dorothea. Casaubon, however, is vexed. He tells Will he must refuse the newspaper job Brooke has offered him or stay away from Lowick. Ladislaw ignores Casaubon's demands and takes the job.

At Lowick, Casaubon asks Dorothea to abide by his as-yet-undisclosed wishes after he dies. Later Dorothea goes to him with her answer, but finds him dead.

Pre-Viewing Questions

1 What kinds of love are there? Which kind of love do you think leads to a fulfilling marriage?

2 What do you think are some of the reasons people gossip? When is gossip harmless and when is it dangerous?

3 How can a personal decision affect the lives of others?

Post-Viewing Questions

1 What is it that Featherstone loves most? How is this conveyed in the episode? What do the people who surround him before he dies love most? How are these people portrayed in the series?

2 How might you describe the love in Dorothea and Casaubon's marriage and the love in Rosamond and Lydgate's marriage? Which spouses do you think dominate and how?

3 Many lives were affected by Mary's decision on the night of Featherstone's death. Do you think Mary made the right choice for herself and for others? Why or why not?

4 What reason does Casaubon offer Will Ladislaw for asking him to leave Middlemarch? Why do or don't you believe him?

Suggested Activities

1 On the facing page is a reproducible activity sheet with excerpts from the novel about love and relationships. Photocopy and distribute the activity sheet and have students answer the questions provided, in groups or as homework. Afterwards, read the three passages aloud and ask students to compare and contrast the tone of each (question C+).

2 Have students write and deliver a funeral eulogy for Casaubon and/or Featherstone. Ask them to try to address these characters' negative qualities without destroying their memory. Students may want to include appropriate background music with their delivery.

3 Ask students to think of a scene from Episode III in which a dialogue cannot be heard by the viewer (for example, the innkeeper's conversation with his friends at the bar). Have them imagine what the characters might have been saying about another character or an event, and in groups, script the dialogue and enact it for the class.

4 To heighten their classmates' interest in the series, have students write and deliver an exciting and provocative television commercial for the series that includes a 30-second summary of Episode III, and an introduction for Episode IV.

When Rosamond and Lydgate first marry, they have little idea of the financial troubles that await them.

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Student Activity

A Look at Love

The trials of love reveal much about human nature. **Instructions:** Read the following three *Middlemarch* passages about love and, on a separate sheet, answer the questions accompanying each passage.

Dorothea and Ladislaw at a chance meeting

A

Each looked at the other as if they had been two flowers which had opened then and there.... It seemed fresh water at her thirsty lips to speak without fear to the one person whom she had found receptive.

"...It seems strange to me how many things I said to you [while in Rome]."

"I remember them all," said Will, with the unspeakable content in his soul of feeling that he was in the presence of a creature worthy to be perfectly loved. (*Chapter 37*)

A1 Eliot uses two metaphors in this passage. What are they, and how do they affect your image of this chance meeting?

A2 What does Eliot mean when she writes that Ladislaw is filled with "unspeakable content in his soul"?

Rosamond and Lydgate talking at home about the medical profession

B

"Still," said Rosamond, "I do not think it is a nice profession, dear."

"It is the grandest profession in the world, Rosamond," said Lydgate, gravely. "And to say that you love me without loving the medical man in me is the same sort of thing as to say that you like eating a peach but don't like its flavour. Don't say that again, dear, it pains me." (*Chapter 45*)

B1 Based on what you've seen of Rosamond, why do you think she doesn't like her husband's profession?

B2 Explain what Lydgate means when he tells Rosamond that if she disapproves of his profession it's the same as saying "that you like eating a peach but don't like its flavour."

B3 Do you agree with Lydgate that you can't love someone if you disapprove of his or her profession? Why or why not?

Dorothea's internal monologue after Casaubon has avoided her

C

"What have I done – what am I – that he should treat me so? ...What is the use of anything I do? He wishes he had never married me."...Was it her fault that she had believed in him...? She was able to estimate him – she who waited on his glances with trembling, and shut her best soul in prison, paying it only hidden visits, that she might be petty enough to please him. In such a crisis as this, some women begin to hate. (*Chapter 42*)

C1 Why does Eliot refer to Dorothea's situation as a crisis?

C2 What does it mean to "shut your best soul in prison"?

C3 What is happening to Dorothea and Casaubon's relationship? Is Dorothea, Casaubon, or both to blame for their situation? Why?

C4 Compare and contrast the tone of passages A, B, and C.

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Episode IV

Plot Synopsis

Aspiring politician Arthur Brooke delivers a muddled speech about reform and is heckled by the townspeople. Disillusioned, he decides to sell the *Pioneer* and suggests that Ladislaw give up his position at the paper as well. At first Ladislaw refuses, but later he relents.

Dorothea learns of a hurtful provision in Casaubon's will from Celia. Though shaken, Dorothea is determined to return to Lowick and take charge of her life.

Rosamond is pregnant. Despite her husband's warnings she goes riding, and when her horse shies, she faints and miscarries.

Bulstrode buys Stone Court from Joshua Rigg. Later his old crony Raffles appears and tries to blackmail him.

Pre-Viewing Questions

1 Politicians are sometimes described as egocentric and eager to promise but slow to deliver. Explain why you agree or disagree with this description.

2 What does classism mean? In what ways is society classist?

Post-Viewing Questions

1 What do you think are Brooke's reasons for getting into politics? What are Ladislaw's reasons? Name a politician that is like Brooke or Ladislaw, and explain why.

2 After Casaubon's death, how is Dorothea's life still restricted by her late husband? Why is Chettam so angry about what Casaubon did? Name another character over whom Casaubon still has influence.

3 Given what you've seen thus far in the series, do you think political reforms were necessary in 19th-century England? Support your answer with examples from the series.

4 Who is Raffles, and what is his relationship to Bulstrode?

5 What factors might account for Rosamond's miscarriage? How do you suppose this event will affect her marriage?

Suggested Activities

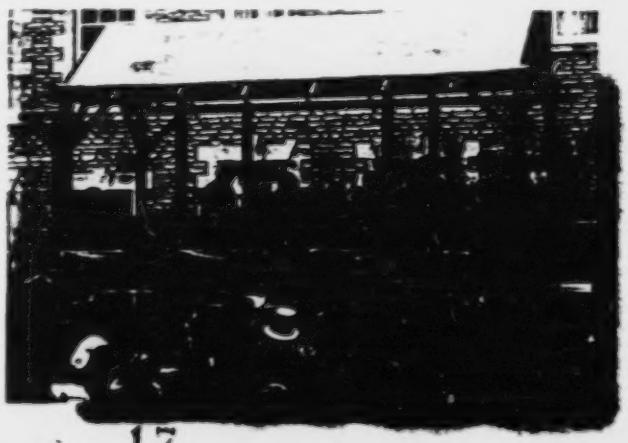
1 At right is a reproducible activity sheet that includes passages from the novel that describe different homes in Middlemarch. Photocopy and distribute the activity sheet and have students complete the assignment, in groups or as homework. Afterwards, have students share their own descriptions of places they know well (question C2).

2 Ask students to bring Dorothea into the 20th century. She's 21, a widow, and has decided to go to college. As part of her application, she must write an essay about what is most important to her. Have students complete that part of her application.

3 Have students draw the interior or exterior of one of the houses or cottages they've seen in any of the *Middlemarch* episodes. Have them explain the home's role in the story and how it is a reflection of its occupants.

4 In groups, have students write and design an issue of the *Middlemarch News* that includes different kinds of articles about events in the town. For example, they might include an interview with Brooke about his campaign, a political analysis of the reform movement, and a society column highlighting the Vincy's party and the Lydgates' high-born visitor. Suggest that they include illustrations and provocative headlines.

5 Have students work individually or in groups to research the 19th-century reform movement in England. Why was it necessary? What were some of the issues it neglected? Ask students to write a report and present it to the class.



After Brooke gives a disastrous speech to the townspeople of Middlemarch about reform, he decides to give up his bid for a parliamentary seat.

The Homes of Middlemarch

By skillfully describing the homes in Middlemarch, Eliot provides readers with a vivid backdrop for her characters. **Instructions:** After reading the following three descriptions of different locations in Middlemarch, answer the questions accompanying each description on a separate sheet.

Stone Court, the home first of Featherstone and then the Bulstrodes

A

The fine old place never looked more like a delightful home than at that moment; the great white lilies were in flower, the nasturtiums, their pretty leaves all silvered with dew, were running away over the low stone wall; the very noises all around had a heart of peace within them. *(Chapter 53)*

A1 What details in this description create a rich image of Stone Court?

A2 Explain what you think is meant by the phrase "the very noises all around had a heart of peace within them"?

Freeman's End, the home of the Dagleys – Brooke's laborer tenants

B

...two of the chimneys were choked with ivy, the large porch was blocked up with bundles of sticks, and half the windows were closed with grey worm-eaten shutters about which the jasmine-boughs grew in wild luxuriance...and there was an aged goat...lying against the open back-kitchen door. *(Chapter 39)*

B1 From this description, what are some of the things you might infer about the people who live at Freeman's End?

B2 Make a list of the adjectives and verbs in this passage. What kind of picture do they create?

Lowick, the home of Dorothea and Casaubon

C

...the flower-beds showed no very careful tendance, and large clumps of trees, chiefly of somber yews, had risen high.... The building, of greenish stone, was in the old English style, not ugly, but small-windowed and melancholy-looking: that sort of house that must have children, many flowers, open windows, and little vistas of bright things, to make it seem a joyous home. *(Chapter 9)*

C1 What is your impression of Lowick after reading this description? Which details about the house and the grounds create this impression?

C2 Think about the mood created by a home or building that you know well. Write a one-paragraph detailed description that evokes the mood of that place.

Episode V

Plot Synopsis

Lydgate pleads with Rosamond to help him deal with their debt, but she remains determined to ask her parents or his uncle for money.

As a favor to Fred, Farebrother asks Mary under what conditions she might marry him.

Rosamond tells Ladislaw about Casaubon's will, and he realizes he must leave Middlemarch.

After Fred helps Caleb Garth settle a brawl between some railroad workers and farmers, Garth offers him a job as a land manager.

Raffles returns to Stone Court, but Bulstrode again pays him off to leave Middlemarch and keep quiet.

Pre-Viewing Questions

1 People heavily in debt sometimes say they can't "get out from under it." What does that saying suggest? In addition to the financial obligation, why does debt place such a heavy emotional burden on most people?

2 How do you think society can restrict a person's options in life?

Post-Viewing Questions

1 Describe both Rosamond's and Dorothea's personality. How does each woman live up to and/or disregard society's expectations of women?

2 Consider Mary Garth – her values, her social position, her self-image, and the possibilities available to her. How does she cope with the confines of society? Why do Fred Vincy and Farebrother both want to marry her?

3 What is happening to Lydgate's life? Discuss all the areas where he's having trouble and why. What might you do if you were in his situation?

4 What does it mean to be internally conflicted? Name a character who appears internally conflicted in this episode. What are the choices this character has? What outside forces have contributed to her or his current situation?

5 What images do you remember most clearly from this episode, and why?

Suggested Activities

1 On the facing page is a reproducible activity sheet with excerpts from the novel highlighting Eliot's characters' use of language. Photocopy and distribute the activity sheet and have students complete the assignment, in groups or as homework. Afterwards, have students discuss their answers with the entire class.

2 Have groups of students work together to turn some of what they've seen in the *Middlemarch* series into a contemporary TV soap opera episode. Once the scripts are written, students can present them to the class.

3 Many people in Middlemarch (and 19th-century England) were wary of railroads and the change they would bring. Ask students to think of an idea or a technology that elicits this kind of reaction today. Have them write an essay comparing the response to a current idea with the Middlemarchers' reaction to the coming of the railroad. Before they write the essay, you may want to have students do some research on the Luddites, a 19th-century English group opposed to labor-saving machinery.

4 Students can start planning a *Middlemarch* game that they can complete after viewing Episode VI. It could be a board game, with traps like "Fred's horse goes lame. Go back three spaces." Or, it could be a quiz show in which contestants answer questions about the characters and events in *Middlemarch*.

5 The *Middlemarch Enquirer* is known for printing half-truths and publicizing the bizarre. Ask students to think of incidents from this episode that they could twist around for this sensational-istic newspaper. Have groups of students write these articles and create a front page of the *Enquirer*.

Unbeknownst to Mary Garth, Reverend Farebrother is in love with her.

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The Power of Language

Student Activity

Instructions: Read the three passages below and answer the accompanying questions on a separate sheet.

Fred Vincy and Caleb Garth discussing whether Fred is suited for Garth's trade

A1 In what ways do you think Fred's life will improve if he takes Caleb Garth's advice?

A2 What do Caleb Garth's words tell us about him and his values?

A

"You think I could do some good at [managing land], if I were to try?" said Fred, more eagerly.

"That depends," said Caleb. "You... must love your work, and not be always looking over the edge of it, wanting your play to begin. And... you must not be ashamed of your work, and think it would be more honorable to you to be doing something else. You must always have a pride in your work and in learning to do it well..." *(Chapter 56)*

Dorothea discussing her plans after Casaubon's death

B1 What issues must Dorothea confront after Casaubon's death? What does this speech reveal about her approach to resolving these issues?

B2 Consider the language of Dorothea's speech. What kinds of words does she use? How many syllables, for example, do most of them contain? How does the tone of this speech support its meaning?

B

"I shall never marry again... I should like to take a great deal of land, and drain it, and make a little colony, where everybody should work, and all the work should be done well. I should know every one of the people and be their friend... I should like to feel ...that I improved a great piece of land, because the work is of a healthy kind while it is being done, and after it is done, men are the better for it." *(Chapter 56)*

Lydgate and Rosamond discussing their debts

C1 In this conversation, what is the difference between what Lydgate feels and what Rosamond feels?

C2 What is the difference between neutrality and "aloof neutrality" or a chill and a "mortal" chill? If you were the director of this episode, how might you direct the actors in this scene?

C

"I am obliged to tell you what will hurt you, Rosy. But there are things which husband and wife must think of together. I daresay it has occurred to you... that I am short of money."

"What can *I* do, Tertius?" Rosamond's thin utterance threw into the words as much aloof neutrality as they could hold. They fell like a mortal chill on Lydgate's roused tenderness. *(Chapter 58)*

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Episode VI

Plot Synopsis

In a letter, Lydgate's uncle scorns him for putting Rosamond up to asking for money. Lydgate, previously unaware of Rosamond's request, is despondent. He begins to gamble, but Fred stops him.

When Bulstrode withdraws his support of the hospital, Lydgate asks him for money but is refused. Later, at Stone Court, while Lydgate treats a sickly Raffles, Bulstrode decides to lend him the money. Against Lydgate's instructions, Bulstrode allows the housekeeper to give Raffles brandy. The brandy kills him, and when the hospital board learns of Raffles' death they demand that Bulstrode step down. Lydgate is assumed to be guilty by association.

Dorothea goes to Lydgate's house and finds Will and Rosamond together. She leaves assuming the worst. Later, Rosamond tells her that Ladislaw is in love with her.

Pre-Viewing Questions

1 How would you describe despair? What are some of its causes and what do you think can be done to dispel it?

2 What is an "unsung hero" and what role does this kind of person play in society?

Post-Viewing Questions

1 Why do you think Eliot chose not to match Dorothea with Lydgate? If she had, do you think this relationship would have worked? Why or why not?

2 Discuss how Dorothea and Lydgate cope with their despair. Do you think each of them does the right thing? What might you have done in their situation?

3 Think about all the episodes you have seen. What lessons are there to be learned from the story?

4 Are there any heroes in *Middlemarch*? If so, who are they, and why do you think so?

5 If you could play any part in *Middlemarch*, which would it be, and why?

6 How is Middlemarch the same or different from your town?

7 Think of any of the *Middlemarch* characters. If he or she were alive today, what might his or her life be like?

Suggested Activities

1 At right is a reproducible activity sheet that gives students the opportunity to study passages of the narrator's commentary from the novel. Photocopy and distribute the activity sheet and have students complete the assignment, in groups or as homework. Afterwards, have students discuss their answers with the entire class.

2 What did Farebrother and Bulstrode want from Lydgate, and what did they offer him in return? How did Lydgate feel about each man? Have students write an essay comparing and contrasting Lydgate's relationship with these two men.

3 Have students stage a mock trial in which Bulstrode is accused of murdering Raffles. Suggest that they include testimony from Lydgate, Ladislaw, Caleb Garth, and Bambridge.

4 Ask students to hold a seminar on marriage with Dorothea, Rosamond, Mary, Casaubon, Ladislaw, Lydgate, and Fred as participants. Have seven students play the different parts and speak about their personal experiences and beliefs.

5 In groups, have students write scenes that they think would be likely to happen later in the lives of various *Middlemarch* characters. Each group can act its scene out for the class and then discuss why they believe the story would continue this way.

Bulstrode is devastated when he is asked to step down from his position as chairman of the hospital board.

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The Narrator in Middlemarch

The voice of the omniscient narrator, while almost silent in the television series, plays a central role in the novel. **Instructions:** Read the five passages below of narrator commentary and answer the questions accompanying each passage on a separate sheet.

On Casaubon before his marriage

A

He had not had much foretaste of happiness in his previous life…his soul…went on fluttering in the swampy ground where it was hatched, thinking of its wings and never flying…For my part I am very sorry for him. It is an uneasy lot at best…to be present at this great spectacle of life and never to be liberated from a small hungry shivering self. *(Chapter 29)*

A1 What are the two images used to describe Casaubon in this passage, and what effect do they have on your attitude toward him?

A2 What does it mean for a creature to think about its wings but never fly?

On youth

B

If youth is the season of hope, it is often so only in the sense that our elders are hopeful about us; for no age is so apt as youth to think its emotions, partings, and resolves are the last of their kind. Each crisis seems final, simply because it is new. *(Chapter 55)*

B1 Why, according to passage B, don't young people see themselves as living in the season of hope?

B2 Do you agree with this assessment? Why or why not?

On human nature

C

A human being…is a very wonderful whole, the slow creation of long interchanging influences; and charm is a result of two such wholes, the one loving and one loved. *(Chapter 40)*

One must be poor to know the luxury of giving. *(Chapter 17)*

There is a sort of jealousy which needs very little fire; it is hardly a passion, but a blight bred in the cloudy, damp despondency of uneasy egoism. *(Chapter 21)*

C1 Explain what you think is being said in each of these sentences.

On the nature of being

D

For there is no creature whose inward being is so strong that it is not greatly determined by what lies outside it. *(Finale)*

D1 What is the "what" described in passage C? What do you think this passage is saying about the nature of life? Why do or don't you agree with the narrator?

D2 How does this idea relate to your own life or to the life of someone you know well?

On Dorothea

E

But the effect of her being on those around her was incalculably diffusive: for the growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts; and that things are not so ill with you and me as they might have been, is half owing to the number who lived faithfully hidden lives, and rest in unvisited tombs. *(Finale)*

E1 What does it mean for an effect to be "incalculably diffusive"?

E2 Do you agree that the "growing good of the world is partly dependent on unhistoric acts"? Use examples to support your answer.

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Novels and Film Adaptations

By comparing a novel to its film adaptation, students can gain a better understanding of each work's unique power. Use the following questions and activities to help your students compare *Middlemarch* the novel to *Middlemarch* the television series, or other novels to their film adaptations.

Discussion Questions

1 What are some of the things an author must consider before beginning a novel? What are some of the things a director must consider before beginning a film adaptation of a novel? How are these considerations similar and/or different?

2 When a novel is adapted for the screen, what do you think is gained and what do you think is lost? How do you think reading a book is different from watching a film?

3 A novel is essentially the work of a single person, while a film involves the work of many people. How do you think this fact contributes to the final product in each case?

4 What are the risks involved with making a novel into a film 100 years after it was written?

Suggested Activities

1 Have students choose an excerpt from the novel and turn it into a scene for a TV drama. They should begin by writing a script for the passage. When the script is ready, students can have auditions, assign parts, design a set or find an appropriate location, choose costumes, plan their shots, and then film the scene with a video camera. Ask students to present their video to the class and discuss the differences between their work and Eliot's.

2 People are often influenced by their own concerns and interests when they interpret the work of others. Ask students what issues they think the creators of the *Middlemarch* television series chose to highlight, and why. Have them write an essay, discussing how the *Middlemarch* series might reflect its producer, scriptwriter, director, actors, and film crew.

3 After students watch the series, have them read a chapter from Eliot's *Middlemarch*. Ask them to look for differences between the novel and the film. Have students make notes as they read, and later debate in teams the merits and drawbacks of each medium.

4 Have groups of students design a movie poster for *Middlemarch* the television series. Afterwards, students can compare their posters with the covers of different copies of *Middlemarch* the novel, and discuss the differences and similarities between them. Which do you think are more eye-catching and why?

5 Invite groups of students to discuss whether or not they think the characters in the *Middlemarch* series were properly cast. Ask them to imagine a different look and manner for two or three of the characters, and to write down how this might have either benefited or detracted from the production.

Costumes that accurately reflect the era in which a novel takes place are essential to a successful film adaptation. In this picture from *Middlemarch*, Elizabeth Spriggs (Mrs. Cadwallader) wears a hat, a dress, and jewelry typical of an English aristocrat in the 1830s.

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